

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Huntley Project Office

Other names/site number: Huntley Project Irrigation District Office

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2291 2nd Street West

City or town: Ballantine State: MT County: Yellowstone

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title:

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☐
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☒

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non Contributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: office building

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD, METAL -Steel, CONCRETE

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Huntley Project Office is located in the small rural community of Ballantine, Montana. The office serves as the administrative center of one of the earlier irrigation projects in the nation and the third project in Montana constructed by the U.S. Reclamation Service (now called the Bureau of Reclamation) after the passage of the Reclamation Act in 1902.¹ The office was built in 1918, less than fifteen years after the project was authorized in 1905. It replaced the original Reclamation Service project office after the 1918 Yellowstone River flood inundated portions of the headquarters camp at Huntley, MT. The office is set back from the street at the corner of 2nd Street West and Cane Street in Ballantine. The office is a simple utilitarian rectangular-shaped hipped roof building clad with drop siding, with a concrete vault extending from the rear elevation. The simple design with minimal decoration is in keeping with Reclamation's practice of constructing basic, functional buildings with little or no ornamentation. The district office retains a remarkable degree of integrity and has served as the administrative building for the Huntley Project continuously since its construction, first occupied by the Reclamation Service, and then by the Huntley Project Irrigation District. The office is one of several historic and modern buildings that comprise the Huntley Project Irrigation District yard complex in Ballantine. The office building is, however, the only property in the complex being nominated.²

Narrative Description

The Huntley Project Office is located at 2291 2nd Street West on the corner of 2nd Street West (running north/south) and Cane Street (running east/west) in the small rural community of Ballantine, Montana. Ballantine is approximately twenty-three miles northeast of Billings, the largest city in Montana.

Ballantine is situated within the Yellowstone River Valley and was one of the seven towns platted by Reclamation in 1907 within the Huntley Project. The office is part of the Huntley Project Irrigation District yard, which encompasses an entire block (Block 1) of the Ballantine townsite. The district yard also includes several other historic buildings and a large metal shop building.

The office sits on the northwest corner of Block 1, on the east side of 2nd Street West and south side of Cane Street. The project office is the only building standing today along the east side of 2nd Street in the block. South of the project office, fir trees now stand where two Reclamation employee cottages once stood. Segments of the original concrete sidewalks and extant gate piers, however, still attest to the earlier presence of the cottages.

¹ In 1923 the U.S. Reclamation Service was named the Bureau of Reclamation. For this nomination, Reclamation will be used to refer to both U.S. Reclamation Service and Bureau of Reclamation unless a distinction must be indicated.

² This nomination is part of the mitigation agreed upon by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in a September 2011 Memorandum of Agreement.

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The same concrete sidewalk continues in front of the project office and partially extends to the north towards Cane Street. The project office is set back from the street and is approached by a concrete walkway off the sidewalk. The walkway reaches the front concrete steps where a second side walkway, perpendicular to the first, proceeds south to the district yard. In front of the office and north of the front walkway is the original concrete flagpole base set in the ground. Also north of the sidewalk is a large modern metal sign that identifies the building. A low concrete retaining wall extends between the southwest corner of the office and the 2nd Street sidewalk. Between the project office and Cane Street to the north stand several junipers and cottonwood trees in a rough alignment with the street.

Project Office Description

The project office is a plain, utilitarian office building almost devoid of any ornamentation. It is a rectangular wood frame hipped roof single-story building that sits on a full poured concrete foundation. The main office building measures 36 feet east/west by 28 feet north/south. All windows exhibit original wood casings and sills. Corner boards frame the north corners. A slightly sloping shed roof covers the original poured concrete vault (17 feet by 11 feet) extending from the rear (east) elevation, and a later 1980s wood frame addition (17 feet by 12 feet) fills the southeast corner of the building extending off the south wall of the vault. The entire building is covered with ribbed green steel roofing. The roof displays extended eaves with exposed rafters.

Exterior- West elevation, building façade

The project office façade appears almost exactly as it did when first constructed in 1918. The façade displays a screened cutaway porch that is slightly over half the width of the building at the south end of the façade, accessed by a screen door. A screened transom tops the screen door. The front entrance to the office is centered on the façade, accessed from within the screened porch. Two concrete steps approach the front porch entrance with a metal pipe railing on the right side of the steps.

Drop siding clads the façade exterior. To the left (north) of the screen porch entrance is a single one-over-one wood sash window centered on the wall. This wall also displays a metal sign that appears to be original that reads:

OFFICE
UNITED STATES
RECLAMATION SERVICE

The screened porch has a closed rail clad with drop siding. Above the rail are screen panels with narrow wood frames. The porch interior exhibits a beadboard ceiling and vertical beadboard at the porch rail interior wall. Narrow fir flooring covers the porch floor. Quarter-round molding finishes the floor and ceiling junctures and at the porch railing and screen panel junctures.

Drop siding clads the two interior porch walls (north and east). The east interior wall holds an original three panel wood door with upper single lite (now covered with plywood) topped by a transom that once held patterned glass. The wall also exhibits a one-over-one wood sash window with an accompanying wood screen.

Exterior – North wall (original district office)

The project office north wall is nearly symmetrical with four window openings across its length. All windows are filled with one-over-one replacement units but retain their original framing. Three windows have screens at the lower sash. Near the east end of the wall, the original coal chute door is now encased in concrete. Approximately ten inches of the foundation is exposed at this wall.

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Exterior – South wall (original district office)

The south wall holds a door entry and three window openings across its length. Windows include two original one-over-one wood sash windows (one with an accompanying full screen) and a third one-over-one replacement unit similar to the north windows. The east end of the wall holds an entry where the door has recently been replaced with a flush fiberglass door. A small concrete stoop sits directly in front of the door. Projecting over the door is a recently erected gabled roof hood structure (about 8 feet by 7 feet) supported by two square wood posts set in concrete.

Exterior – East Wall

The rear (east) wall consists of a vault that is original to the building and an addition.

Vault

The rectangular vault extends off the east office wall, approximately five feet from the northeast corner of the building, and measures approximately 17 feet by 10 feet. The vault, constructed of poured reinforced concrete, is entered from inside the building. It has no openings on its north wall. Centered on the vault east wall is a small fixed single-lite window of patterned glass. The north wall has three evenly spaced concrete pads beneath the wall and three evenly spaced small concrete braces at the roof line. The south wall is now covered by the addition.

Addition (1980s construction)

A rectangular addition fills the space at the southeast corner of the building, attached along the south side of the vault and the east wall of the office, and squares the building's east aspect. Pressed board siding covers this wood frame addition with metal clips finishing the southeast corner. Single one-by-one slider windows pierce the east and south addition wall.

Interior

The project office retains many original interior elements such as doors, window frames and baseboards that have not been altered since their installation. The project office presently consists of three rooms, a vault and the 1980s addition. A narrow hall extends from the front door to open into a meeting room at the center of the building. The hall separates the manager's office in the front southwest corner and the smaller clerk's office in the northwest corner. The north hall wall holds a door into the clerk's office and a counter opening. The oak counter has a curved shelf supported by two braces. Above the counter shelf is a rectangular opening filled with grillwork except for a half circular opening between the shelf and the bottom of the grillwork to allow for transactions. Adjacent to the counter on the wall is a metal sign that reads:

WATER ORDERS
COLLECTIONS
TIME CHECKS
INFORMATION

All interior doors are solid five panel oak doors with original bronze hardware and cap trim. Oak baseboards wrap around the meeting room. All interior oak window casing are original and display the same cap trim.

The district office contains the original Barnes Safe & Lock Company floor safe in the clerk's office. Throughout the building are original built-in cabinets, shelving, flat files and card catalogue cabinets. The original Herring-Hall-Marvin Safe Co. iron vault double door accesses the vault from the meeting room. The vault interior has concrete walls, floor and ceiling. The vault houses irrigation district records.

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The 1980s addition consists of a small kitchen area, some cabinets, and the bathroom. This addition also encloses steep wood stairs into the basement. At the bottom of the stairs, a five panel wood door opens into the basement. The full basement is divided into two rooms, has a concrete floor, and is partially finished with narrow horizontal tongue-and-groove boards. The larger room has a coal chute, still visible on the north foundation wall and a partial wood wall presumably for a coal bin. The smaller room at the basement south end is separated from the larger room by a door opening (door has been removed). This room has a wood floor and its' ceiling is covered with beadboard.

Integrity

The Huntley Project Office retains a high degree of integrity of both exterior and interior design and strongly conveys its historic appearance and character. Historic photographs wonderfully reveal the timelessness of the office and its ability to reflect to any visitor its place in history.

The office stands in its original location since its 1918 construction and the immediate setting for this building is undisturbed although it lacks original fencing elements and a flagpole. No intrusions to the surrounding neighborhood have occurred. While the two original employee cottages once located to the south of the office were torn down in the 1970s, the district yard remains active with several historic outbuilding still extant.

The design of the building retains its original rectangular form, roof type, cutaway screened porch, window and door openings and the concrete vault. Most of the original construction materials remain intact like drop siding and window framing and interior finish woodwork. Modifications include steel roofing, which replaced wood shingle roofing material; removal of the chimney, installation of compatible one-over-one replacement window units in some windows and the replacement side door with its projecting hipped roof hood. The rear addition constructed in the 1980s is not overly intrusive due to its low profile and its location in the rear of the building. The Huntley Project office strongly retains its ability to reflect its historic appearance and character and the changes do not affect its overall integrity.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1918-1966

Significant Dates

1918

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

US Reclamation Service

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

In 1905, the US Reclamation Service received approval to construct the Huntley Project, an irrigation project to allow agricultural development of an estimated 35,000 acres east of Billings, Montana. Over time, the operation of the Huntley Project transformed the sagebrush covered plains of this area of eastern Montana to farmland, and supported the development of thriving communities. The Huntley Project Office is eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A. The Huntley Project Office is the building from which, after 1918, Reclamation and then the Huntley Project Irrigation District conducted the daily business of operating the irrigation system. It is therefore an integral component of the project and its success.³

From late December 1918 to December 1927, the building served as Reclamation's headquarters office for the

³ The Huntley Project has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A as an important element in the settlement, development and economic growth of lands along the Yellowstone River in Montana east of Billings. The Huntley Project is also eligible under Criterion C for intact historic irrigation structures exhibiting original engineering of materials, design and workmanship. Information provided by Rick Hanson, Area Archaeologist, Montana Area Office, Bureau of Reclamation, Billings, MT.

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Huntley Project. In the ten years as Reclamation headquarters, the office was “the central hub during any construction and subsequent project management.” The location of the headquarters camp in the centrally located town of Ballantine “established a strong Reclamation presence in the surrounding community and encouraged settlement and was crucial to operation and management activities.”⁴

Since 1928, when Reclamation transferred all Operation and Maintenance (O&M) to the Huntley Project Irrigation District, the office has continued to function in nearly the same capacity. The office and district yard are always in motion, the site from which District staff are solving maintenance and water delivery problems as they occur, keeping records of the project current, storing all the historic records and handling all other clerical and managerial issues.

The building’s period of significance starts with its initial use, and ends in 1966, the commonly-used National Register 50-year cutoff date.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Early Irrigation Efforts in the Billings area

Early settlers recognized the promise of irrigation offered by the Yellowstone River and its importance to the economic development of the region near Billings, Montana. The Northern Pacific Railway followed the Yellowstone River corridor and its subsidiary, the Minnesota and Montana Land and Improvement Company, platted the townsite of Billings in 1882, which today is the largest city in Montana and the socio-economic center for eastern Montana. The following year, the same company developed the first private irrigation project in Billings to irrigate lands west and within Billings. The M & M Canal first conveyed water from the Yellowstone River in 1883, and in 1900 incorporated to become the “Big Ditch Company.”⁵

The next substantial irrigation project in the Billings area utilized the Carey Land Act of 1894. The Carey Land Act offered public lands to western states if the lands were “reclaimed” (irrigated) and settled within ten years. The actual development of the land typically was completed by private enterprise.

Under this act, prominent Billings businessmen Preston Moss, I. D. O’Donnell and Henry Rowley incorporated the Billings Land & Irrigation Company in 1903 to construct an irrigation project, called the “Billings Bench,” that conveyed water to lands primarily north and east of Billings with the Yellowstone as its water source. This was one of three successful Carey Land Act irrigation projects in Montana.⁶

⁴ Christine E. Pfaff, “The Bureau of Reclamation’s Architectural Legacy: 1902-1955,” Bureau of Reclamation, (Denver: Bureau of Reclamation, October 2007), 223 -224.

⁵ Robert G. Dunbar, “Agriculture,” in Merrill G. Burlingame and K. Ross Toole, *A History of Montana*, Vol. 1, (New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1957), 282.

⁶ The Billings Bench Water Association took over this project in 1920. Carroll Van West, “Creating an Irrigator’s Reclamation Service: I. D. O’Donnell, Civic Capitalism, and the U. S. Reclamation Service in the Yellowstone Valley, 1900;1930,” in *The Bureau of Reclamation: History Essays from the Centennial Symposium* Vol. 2, (Denver: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, 2008), 9-10, <http://www.riversimulator.org/Resources/USBR/ReclamationHistory/WestCarrollVan.pdf> (accessed September 20, 2016), see also <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/water/water/rights/docs/survey>;

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The overall Carey Land Act success was limited, as states and private developers did not have funds or expertise to construct large-scale irrigation projects. Western irrigation development interests therefore increased pressure on the federal government to establish a means by which the government would develop irrigation projects. The resultant Reclamation Act of 1902 authorized the federal government to locate and construct large-scale irrigation projects in the arid western states and territories. The Secretary of the Interior then created the US Reclamation Service to design, construction, and manage these federal projects. Funding to construct projects would come from the sale of public lands. The Reclamation Act also required that project construction costs be repaid by the settlers, with those repaid funds going toward further construction. No tracts open to settlement could be larger than 160 acreages, to preserve the concept of family farms and curtail land speculation. The first federal irrigation project authorized in 1903 in Montana was the Milk River Project in northern Montana and Reclamation authorized a total of four projects in Montana by 1920.⁷

Huntley Project

Local promoters in Billings saw great potential for a large-scale irrigation project on unsettled lands east of Billings and south of the Yellowstone River within the Crow Indian Reservation. Efforts to remove these lands from the Crow began in the mid-1890s and in 1899, the Crow agreed to cede lands but Congress never ratified the agreement. Passage of the Reclamation Act revived these efforts, resulting in an amended agreement with the Crow that ceded approximately 1,100,000 acres of land south of the Yellowstone and established the present-day Crow Reservation northern boundary. Approximately 30,000 acres fell within the Huntley Irrigation Project.⁸

In late April 1904, Congress approved the Crow cession and almost simultaneously approved the surveys and investigations of irrigable lands lying south of the Yellowstone River within the ceded area. By February 1905, Reclamation declared the project “workable” for early development with “an abundance of water, good climate and a local market for produce.”⁹ On April 18, 1905, Secretary of the Interior E. A. Hitchcock authorized the construction of the Huntley Project. Reclamation expected the project to irrigate up to 35,000 acres for a total estimated construction cost of \$900,000. Reclamation quickly established their project headquarters at Huntley, Montana, a small town on the western edge of the project area approximately eight miles east of Billings. Although experiencing construction problems similar to other irrigation projects,

[books/yellowstonecountyirrigationdistrict_1943.pdf](#).

⁷ Ibid, 10; Stanley W. Howard, *Green Fields of Montana A Brief History of Irrigation*, (Manhattan, KS, Sunflower University Press, 1992), 29, 31.

⁸ This agreement promised the Crow federal funds of \$1,150,000 for primarily agriculture purposes like irrigation systems, livestock, fencing, etc; See Agreement of 1904, Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2 vols (Washington, DC: GPO, 1904), accessed October 22, 2016, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/treaties>. For a detailed discussion of Crow Treaties, see Burton M. Smith, “Politics and the Crow Indian Land Cessions,” *Montana, the Magazine of Western History (MMWH)*, 36, no. 4 (Autumn 1986): 24-37.

⁹ William H. Hancock, “Huntley Project Irrigation District,” *Sod ‘N Seed ‘N Tumbleweed: A History of the Huntley Project, Yellowstone County, Montana*, Huntley Project History Committee, (Ballantine, MT: Frontier Press, 2003), 8, 13; Timothy Dick, “Huntley Project” (Denver: Bureau of Reclamation, 1996), 5; Reclamation, Great Plains Region, Multimedia, “The Huntley Project’s Rocky Childhood.”

<http://www.usbr.gov/gp/multimedia/archive/glimpse/huntley.html>, (accessed October 25, 2016).

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Reclamation advanced towards its goal to deliver water by 1907.¹⁰

On May 21, 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt declared lands within the Huntley Project open for settlement. These lands consisted of 582 farm units of approximately 40 acres each with allowable additional lands totaling 160 in each unit. A lottery for lands within the Huntley Project attracted 5,491 individuals, although only 76 of the first 1000 chosen eventually completed the entire filing process. Regardless, Secretary of the Interior James A. Garfield traveled to Huntley by train and ceremoniously opened the gates that spilled the first water into the system on June 26, 1907. In July the project opened for settlement. The Huntley Project was the second Reclamation project in the nation to deliver water to farm units in April 1908. While only 4,100 acres received irrigation waters in 1908, by June 1909 the Huntley Project counted 311 filings within the project totaling about 19,000 acres, including 14,000 irrigable acres.¹¹

The opening of the Huntley Project coincided with the beginning of the homesteading boom years in Montana. In 1909, the federal government enacted the Enlarged Homestead Act that provided 320 acres to any person willing to improve and farm it. The Act, combined with the 1862 Homestead Act, attracted thousands of dry land farmers to south central and eastern Montana between 1909 and 1918.

As the Huntley Project settlers largely came from the mid-west where ample rainfall resulted in little need for irrigation, most settlers had no experience with irrigation. They did not realize that Reclamation constructed the canals and laterals but did not construct the ditches necessary to convey water within the farm units themselves. When they arrived on their boxcar with all their worldly possessions, many remember a barren landscape of sagebrush and greasewood. The early settlers had to clear and burn all the vegetation, build a house (usually a tarpaper shack), and get acreage plowed, and planted, and fenced, and get a certain amount of acreage under irrigation in order to meet the requirements to 'prove' on their filing. Many lacked the savings to pay for these improvements and support themselves, and so supplemented their lean years by selling chickens, eggs, milk, and even watermelons. Many also took jobs off the homestead. Many settlers moved off their property, abandoning their claim or selling, allowing others to expand their holdings. The success of the Huntley Project depended on those settlers who persevered, adapted, and became successful irrigators. Today, the Huntley Project irrigates nearly 30,000 acres with primary crops being alfalfa and sugar beets.¹²

Huntley Project Irrigation District

The success of the project depended on cooperation between Reclamation and the irrigators, and one of the most important aspects of the success of the Huntley Project was the creation of the Huntley Irrigation District. After the construction phase of the project, generally completed by 1915, a "period of adjustment commenced." Huntley Project farmers first began to discuss forming an irrigation district in the late teens and they organized the Huntley Project Irrigation District under Montana Law in July, 1921, the first step towards the "ultimate management of the Project." After six years of at times contentious negotiations about drainage

¹⁰ Ibid. Please refer to Dick, "The Huntley Project" for a detailed construction history of the Huntley Project.

¹¹ Ibid; U. S. Reclamation Service, *Eighth Annual Report of Reclamation Service* 1908;1909, (Washington: GPO, 1910), 98. The water released by Garfield only dampened the system while the first true delivery of water was in April 1908.

¹² Numerous stories of the early years are found throughout the local history in Huntley Project History Committee, *Sod 'N Seed 'N Tumbleweed*.

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problems and repayment schedules, a contract was finally agreed upon. The United States transferred to the Huntley Project Irrigation District “the care, operation and maintenance of the irrigation and drainage works of the project, including canals, laterals, and structures on December 31, 1927.”¹³

E. E. Lewis started work on February 1, 1928 as superintendent of the irrigation district and remained in this position until 1943. His diary for his first year provides just a cursory view of the activities within the district. Lewis, who was employed by Reclamation at the Huntley project earlier in his career, spent most of his time out in the field rather than in the office, responding to various concerns and problems within the project. Howard S. Elliott served as his secretary/clerk performing “routine office work” and was at times assisted by Margaret Simek for typing. Both had previously worked for Reclamation and Elliott stayed at the district until 1953. Lewis reported the ditch rider was always busy in the field necessitating other men to make repairs to district buildings and structures, under the direction of Foreman Fred Belter. Occasionally Reclamation personnel visited the district from western or Washington, D.C. offices. In addition to maintenance and operations, Lewis reported the district collected crop census information each fall.¹⁴

The Huntley Project Irrigation District is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Huntley Project. The district office, as the administrative center of the Huntley Project Irrigation District, is the physical expression of a very large and active irrigation district responsible for the repair and replacement of all irrigation structures, cleaning and maintaining all canals, laterals and pumps, and repair and replacement of all major infrastructures within the project.¹⁵

The Huntley Project’s

. . . diversion dam is located on the Yellowstone River approximately ten miles downstream from Billings and serves land on the south side of the river. The Project works include a rockfill and concrete diversion dam in the Yellowstone River, 54 miles of canal, 202 miles of laterals, a hydraulic turbine-driven pumping plant, an auxiliary electric pumping plant, and Anita Reservoir, an off-stream storage facility.¹⁶

Huntley Irrigation District Office Construction

As previously stated, Reclamation located their first Huntley Project headquarters “camp” at Huntley, Montana in the eastern-most portion of the Huntley Project. Historic photographs of the headquarters show an alignment of one-story hipped roof buildings within a fenced area situated on the western outskirts of the town. The buildings were located adjacent to a bend on the south bank of the Yellowstone River.

¹³ Contract Ilr;102 on file at Huntley Project Irrigation District Office, Ballantine, MT.

¹⁴ E. E. Lewis, diary on file at Huntley Project Museum of Irrigated Agriculture, Huntley, MT.

¹⁵ Today, most of the day-to-day administration of the Huntley Irrigation District is the responsibility of one individual who maintains all district paperwork. The office workload involves all bookkeeping, maintaining water rights information, land owner documents, creating maps and drawings, as well as serving as the repository for all of the district office no longer collects assessments from the land owners, which now go directly to the county. Liz Freeman, interview with Joan L. Brownell, Huntley Project Irrigation District Office, Ballantine, MT, November 10, 2016.

¹⁶ “Lewis and Clark: Early Projects and their Impacts.” Reclamation/Great Plains/Multimedia/<http://www.usbr.gov/gp/multimedia/archive/glimpse/huntley.html>, (accessed October 25, 2016).

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Reclamation established the camp in 1905 where it remained until 1918.

This location choice proved disastrous in June 1918 when the Yellowstone River rapidly reached unprecedented flood levels up and down the river. The *Billings Gazette* reported the Reclamation headquarters buildings “are in imminent danger of being carried away.”¹⁷ On June 11, the Yellowstone at Huntley started to cut into the bank by the camp. Over the next few days, the river kept rising and attempts made to stop the erosion “was of no avail.” By Sunday, the river “had cut practically 150 feet from the back part of the camp,” forcing several cottages to be “rolled” away from the flooding.¹⁸

After the Yellowstone began to slowly recede, Reclamation assessed damages to the headquarters camp. Mr. Fifield, the Huntley Project Supervisor, reported the loss of one cottage and the ice house by the flooding:

After the destruction of this much of the headquarters camp it was thought advisable not to reconstruct the camp at Huntley, but to move headquarters to some more central location on the project About October 12th, authority was received to proceed with construction of the new headquarters buildings on Ballantine townsite.¹⁹

Ballantine was first established by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway (formerly the Burlington & Missouri) who erected a station here in 1896 consisting of a boxcar for a depot and a section house.²⁰ This same location became the townsite of Ballantine, one of seven townsites surveyed and platted by Reclamation in 1907. The townsite of Ballantine consisted of eleven blocks set in the typical grid pattern north of the railroad right-of-way. When platting the townsite, Reclamation reserved all of Block One for their purposes.²¹ The Ballantine Post Office opened in July 1907, a month after the Huntley Project opened for settlement. An early 1907 photograph of Ballantine shows a water tank, some boxcars, scattered tents and tarpaper shacks.

Ballantine grew rapidly during the early years of the Huntley Project as it served as a trading center for settlers with its convenient location near the center of the project. By 1909, Reclamation reported that Ballantine had three stores, a lumber yard, a schoolhouse, a church, and a new railroad depot. In 1911, the town expanded further with a bank, elevator, and cooperative cheese factory.²²

By 1916, Ballantine had a thriving business community, including the Ballantine Drug Company, Ballantine Meat Market, Ballantine State Bank, Boschert Brothers Hardware store, McIntyre-Sanders Lumber Company, Hotel Olden, and the Van Pelt general store. The town also had a milliner, a blacksmith, a dentist, a movie

¹⁷ *Billings Gazette*, June 15, 1918.

¹⁸ E. E. Lewis diary, on file Huntley Project Museum of Irrigated Agriculture, Huntley, MT.

¹⁹ Department of the Interior, United States Reclamation Service, *Huntley Project Montana, Annual Project History, 1918*, 66 (hereinafter referred to as Huntley Project History with appropriate date); A. R. Hubert McGinnis diary, on file Huntley Project Museum of Irrigated Agriculture, Huntley, MT.

²⁰ An agreement between the Burlington and Northern Pacific allowed the Burlington to run the Northern Pacific tracks into Billings. The Burlington joined the Northern Pacific tracks just west of Huntley.

²¹ The other six towns were Huntley, Worden, Osborn, Anita, Newton and Pompeys Pillar. Three towns (Osborn, Anita and Newton) no longer exist.

²² U. S. Reclamation Service, *Eighth Annual Report of Reclamation Service 1908;1909*, (Washington: GPO, 1910), 99; J. Homer Hancock, “Ballantine,” unpublished manuscript on file at Sunnyside Library, Worden, MT.

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theatre, a billiard hall, a church, and a school.²³

Unfortunately, Ballantine experienced a devastating fire in August 1918 that destroyed much of its growing business district. A few months after this disaster, Reclamation approved the relocation of Reclamation headquarters to Ballantine a few months after this disaster. While this must have given encouragement to the community, the town never truly recovered although many businesses rebuilt. Ballantine residents showed their commitment to their community in 1921 when they erected a community hall that still is in use today. The 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance map for Ballantine shows the Reclamation yard, the community hall, a saloon, a grocery store, several garages, an Occident elevator, a lumber company, and numerous residences.²⁴ The town of Ballantine declined during the 1950s and 1960s and today is primarily a residential community. Nevertheless, the Huntley Project Irrigation District office remains in Ballantine.²⁵

Two days after receiving approval for the relocation of the Huntley Project headquarters camp to Ballantine in October 1918, S. A. Balcher, a Reclamation employee, began excavation for the office foundation and basement. Almost immediately, construction work slowed when Mr. Balcher became ill, presumably with the flu, as the pandemic flu began to sweep across the nation. Locally, Yellowstone County experienced over 100 deaths by mid- November. A. R. McGinnis, Project Engineer, in his diary reported during this time that “workers hard to secure.” Supervisor Fifield confirmed this stating “the epidemic of influenza delayed the completion of the removal” from Huntley until 1919.²⁶

Reclamation generally utilized readily accessible lumber and presumably in this case obtained lumber from the local lumber yard in Ballantine. Materials could also be shipped via the railway from Billings. Reclamation hired local men as day laborers for the construction, supervised by a Reclamation employee.²⁷

The new headquarters camp site plan or “layout,” approved by Supervisor Fifield, identifies the Reclamation office in the northwest corner of the Reclamation yard. The building dimensions are 28 feet by 36 feet with a rectangular projection off the east wall (but not identified as the vault). The plan shows three cottages aligned south of the office (although only two were erected). The site plan also shows several outbuildings, some of which are extant today.²⁸

While Reclamation constructed the new headquarters office on site in Ballantine, they moved two buildings to Ballantine from the Huntley headquarters to serve as the Project Manager’s and Chief Clerk’s dwellings. In December 1918, Ike Parrish, a house mover from Billings, took almost three days to move each building, using a heavy steam tractor engine that reportedly handled “the work easily.” The Huntley camp dormitory

²³ R. L. Polk and Company, *Directory of Billings and Red Lodge Yellowstone, Carbon, Stillwater and Big Horn Counties*, (Helena, MT: R. L. Polk, 1916), 162.

²⁴ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *Ballantine, MT, 1927*, www.sanborn.uni.com (accessed September 12, 1916).

²⁵ *Sod ‘N Seed ‘N Tumbleweed*, 64; In the 1930s, Reclamation established a Civilian Conservation Camp south of Ballantine whose young men worked constructing the Anita Dam within the Huntley Project. This same camp later became a Prisoner of War Camp in the 1940s.

²⁶ A. R. McGinnis diary; *Huntley Project History*, 1918, 67.

²⁷ Pfaff, “Bureau of Reclamation’s Architectural Legacy,” 56, 63.

²⁸ US Department of the Interior, United States Reclamation Service, “Huntley Project – Mont Layout of Camp Headquarters Ballantine,” H879, 10-30-18, on file, Huntley Project Irrigation District Office, Ballantine, MT.

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was moved and remodeled as the Chief Clerk's dwelling. The Project Engineer's cottage was also moved and remodeled to become the Project Manager's dwelling. The other building transported was the storehouse, which Reclamation doubled in size at Ballantine.²⁹

The headquarters office in Ballantine officially opened to the public on January 4, 1919 although the *Reclamation Era* reported it was open for business the day after Christmas. Work continued during January and February on two employee cottages and various outbuildings. By March, all buildings were completed with the exception of painting and other minor details. The entire block initially was fenced with woven wire and three strands of barbed wire. The first attempts at landscaping by planting grass seed failed due to dry hot weather. By the summer of 1919, all buildings had been painted and "the entire layout was finished in all details." The total cost of the headquarters camp, also called the Ballantine O & M Camp, totaled \$17,095.89.³⁰

An April 1919 inventory described the newly constructed project office. The building was one-story with four rooms, had plastered walls, a shingled roof, wood flooring and one brick chimney. A hot air furnace provided heating and gas lamps provided lighting. The office was swept every day. The cost of the office totaled \$5018.72 and interior improvements as furniture and fixtures totaled \$1000.00.³¹

Unfortunately, no drawing for the Huntley Project Office at Ballantine has been located although all drawings for other buildings at the camp are available at the district office. The only direct official reference to the office was an index card discovered in a card file in the vault. This card reads:

Ballantine Headquarters Office Headquarters H-873 10-29-'18
(Frannie Div Office Building at Denver)

The H-873 number is in sequence with all the other drawings for new buildings at the new headquarters camp in Ballantine. Possibly due to the circumstances caused by the 1918 flood and need for an office to conduct business, Reclamation expedited efforts to construct a new headquarters office and bypassed established procedures.³²

Many locals believe Reclamation relocated the Ballantine office from either the original headquarters camp in Huntley or elsewhere within the Huntley Project. However, the 1918 diary of Mr. Kneales of Reclamation clearly demonstrates the project office was built on site. On October 12-16, 1918, Mr. Kneales wrote that "a crew of about 7 men, 1 team and 2 carpenter [sic] worked on the foundation at the new government buildings at Ballantine." By November 2, they were framing the office building and a few days later, the carpenters set up window frames. From November 8 through 13, they worked on the office "framing, sheeting and shingling."³³

²⁹ *Huntley Project History* 1918, 67; Lewis diary.

³⁰ *Huntley Project History* 1919, 74.

³¹ Ibid., "Insurance Survey," 8.

³² No such number has been found in the Reclamation's data base. The Shoshone Project Irrigation District Office personnel in Wyoming also could not locate either a drawing or photograph of the Frannie Division office (Frannie is still a field office). Further research in Reclamation records in the National Archives is necessary to hopefully locate the district office drawing.

³³ Unfortunately, the last three diary entries do not mention the office. Kneales 1918 diary, Huntley Project Irrigation District

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After Reclamation relocated its headquarters to Ballantine, most buildings left at the Huntley headquarters were sold at public auction in May 1919, except for the old office building and a bunkhouse. In June 1919, William Kinnick, who briefly owned a hotel and livery stable in Huntley, purchased these two buildings.³⁴

Reclamation Project Engineer McGinnis reported in his diary that “in due time five new buildings were erected, consisting of office, Storehouse, garage for four cars, barn and blacksmith shop; two cottages and old storehouse were moved from Huntley.” G. H. Bolt, Chief Clerk, also reported the new headquarters camp consisting of a “new office building, garage, blacksmith shop, storehouse and sewer and water system was being constructed...”³⁵

A ca 1919 historic photograph shows the newly constructed headquarters office. It is nearly identical to the present day condition of the office, missing just a few details, such as concrete steps and landscaping features. A later historic photograph of the Lewis family in front of their cottage shows the project office in the background looking much like it looks today.³⁶

A 1920 historic photograph in front of the newly constructed office identifies a staff of six people at the Huntley Project Reclamation headquarters that included the project manager, water record clerk, engineer, special fiscal agent, costkeeper, and the chief clerk. The project manager was “responsible for the “economic and efficient administration of the project affairs.” The chief clerk was “responsible for all accounting work and in charge of project headquarters buildings.” Work in the office consisted of preparation of reports, project histories, crop reports, project maps, and monthly project reports.³⁷

The historic engineering structures within historic irrigation systems, like the Huntley Project, are rapidly changing with new technologies. The Huntley Project Office reflects its original appearance and character, and still serves its original function for the irrigation district since its original construction in 1918, by administering the operation and maintenance of the project itself. Historian Carroll Van West visited the project office in Ballantine in 1915 and found “amazingly the very simple form vernacular building that houses the project’s office still stands, a little building that really conveys a huge story of a federal program that transformed a region.”³⁸

Office, Ballantine, MT.

³⁴ *Huntley Project History 1919*, 30; William Walter Kinnick Family Story, <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/earlyyrs/kinnick/kinnickweb/wmwkinn.html>; (accessed October 24, 2016).

³⁵ McGinnis diary; *Huntley Project History 1919*, 21; *Huntley Project History 1920*, 20.

³⁶ Photograph on file, Huntley Project Irrigation District Office, Ballantine, MT; Hubert E. Lewis album, on file Huntley Project Museum of Irrigated History, Huntley, MT.

³⁷ Photograph on file Huntley District Irrigation Office, Ballantine, MT; U.S Bureau of Reclamation. *Manual of the Bureau of Reclamation*, (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1939).

³⁸ Carroll Van West, “Revisiting Montana’s Historic Landscape 30 Years in the Big Sky Country,” accessed Oct 15, 2016; <https://montanahistoriclandscape.com/2015/03/09/billings:heart:of:the:midland:empire/>.

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The Huntley Project's Rocky Childhood

Lewis and Clark: Early Projects and their Impacts

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Huntley Project Mont Layout of Camp Headquarters Ballantine Drawings of Buildings for Headquarters Camp Ballantine.

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Lewis and Clark: Early Projects and their Impacts

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☒ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: Bureau of Reclamation

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 45.950160 Longitude: -108.144920

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

NE1/4SW1/4 , Section 5, T2N, R29E, Lots15-16, Block 1, Original Plat Ballantine, MT The boundary is comprised of the Huntley Project Office building and the associated yard extending to the sidewalk along 2nd Street West, to the north edge of the grass yard to Cane Street and to the extent of the grass lawn to the rear (east) of the building, and a small buffer between the south office wall and a parking area. The south boundary follows a low concrete retaining wall to the 2nd Street West sidewalk.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the footprint of the Huntley Project Office and the associated yard and landscaping extending to include sidewalks, walkways, flagpole base, an original fence concrete pier, a low concrete retaining wall and a row of junipers north of the office. On the south, the parking area was created after the houses and their associated landscape was removed; the parking area does not represent the historic use. The Huntley Project Office nomination is part of a mitigation agreed upon by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in a September 2011 Memorandum of Agreement. No other buildings were included in this agreement.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Joan L. Brownell, revisions by Rick Hanson and Lynn MacDonald

organization: for Bureau of Reclamation

street & number: PO Box 600

city or town: state: Fishtail, MT

zip code: 59028

e-mail:

telephone:

date:

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Please see Continuation Sheets

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County: State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

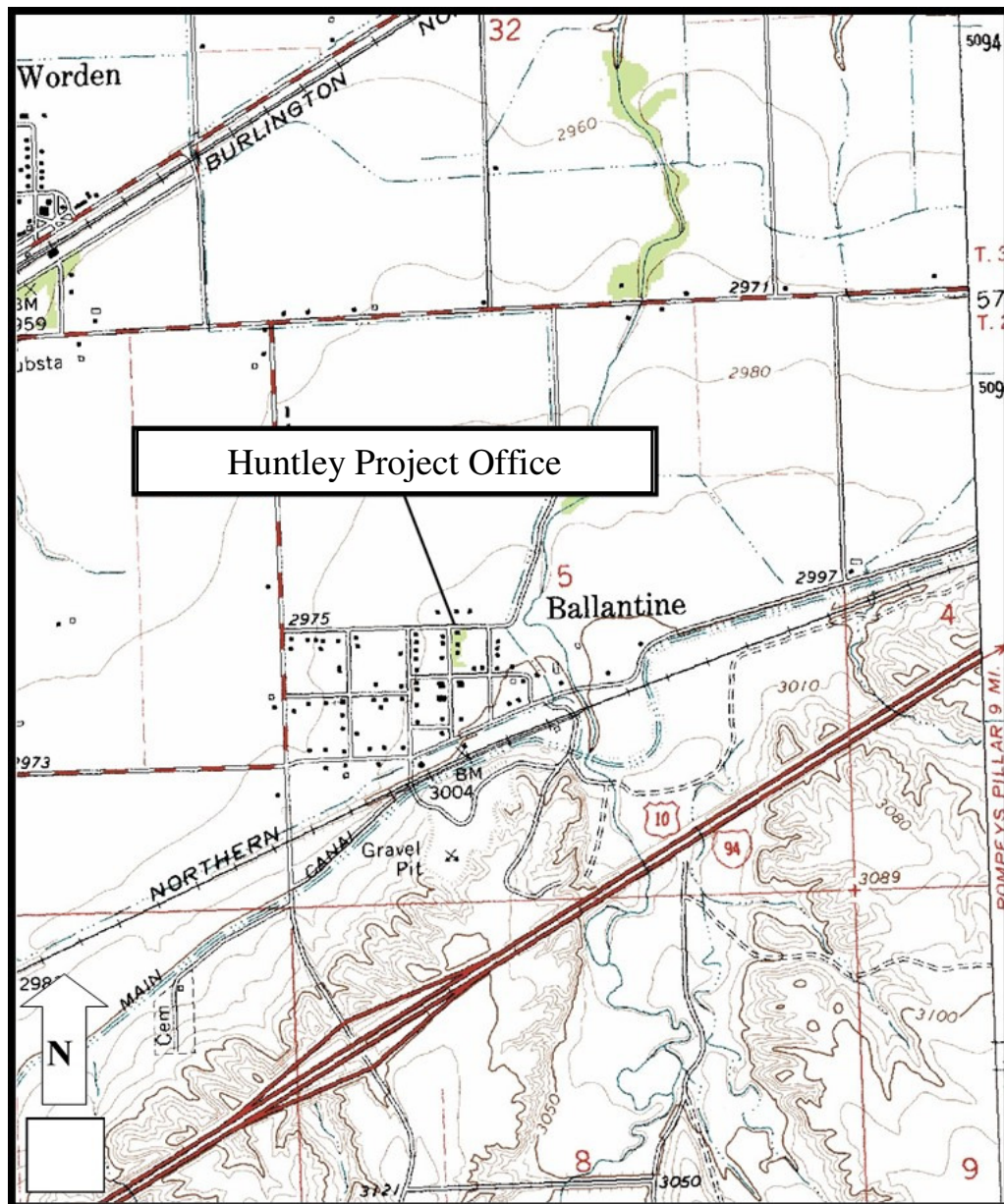
1 of ____.

Please see Continuation Sheets

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Location of the Huntley Project Office
Found on the Worden 7.5 quadrangle map
T2N E29E NE1/4 SW1/4 of Section 5

Huntley Project Office
Name of Property

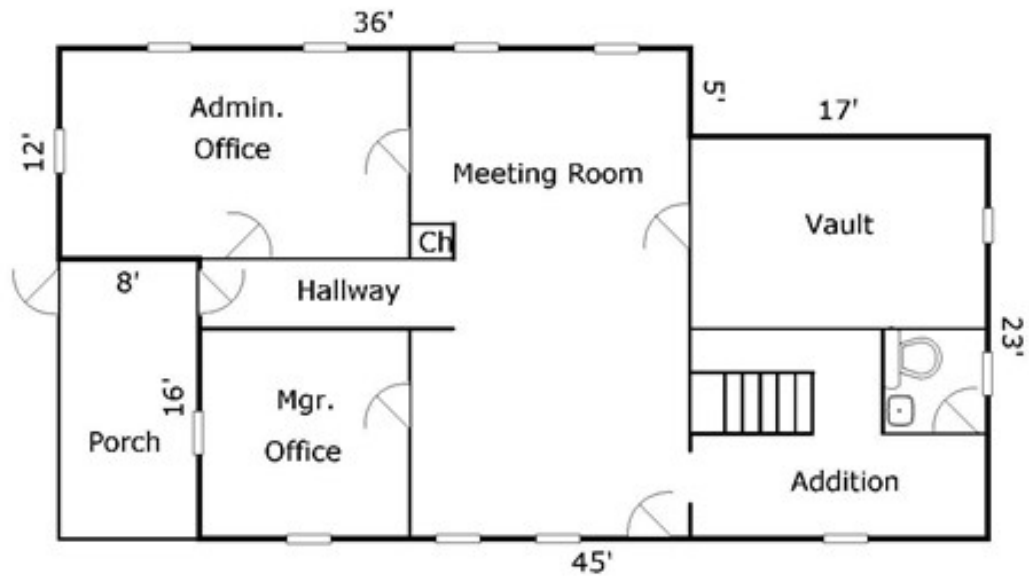
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Location of the Huntley Project Office
Aerial view
T2N E29E NE1/4 SW1/4 of Section 5

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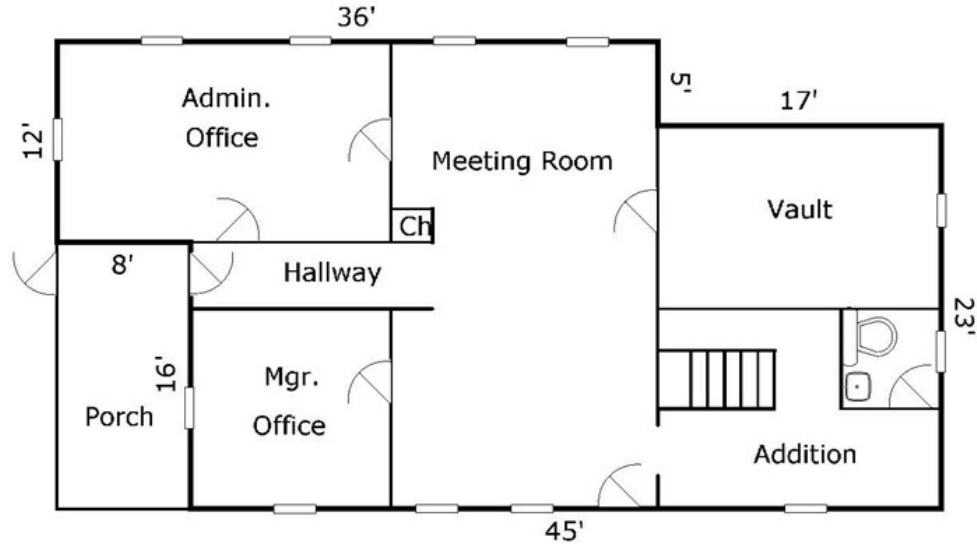
TOTAL Sketch by a la mode, inc.

Area Calculations Summary

Living Area	
First Floor	1271 Sq ft
Total Living Area (Rounded):	1271 Sq ft

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TOTAL Sketch by a la mode, Inc.

Area Calculations Summary

Living Area

First Floor

1271 Sq ft

Total Living Area (Rounded):

1271 Sq ft

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16'

28'

Basement

28'

Storage

16'

Stairs

Area Calculations Summary	
Non-Living Area	448 Sq Ft
Undefined Area	

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All Photos

National Register Photographs

Name:	Huntley Project Office
County and State	Yellowstone County, Montana
Photographer	Joan L. Brownell
Date of Photograph	September 2016
Location of original negative/digital image	Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT;
	Bureau of Reclamation, Montana Area Office, Billings MT.

Description and view of camera: South and West elevations, view to north/northeast

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0001

Description and view of camera: West elevation (façade), view to east

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0002

Description and view of camera: North and West elevation, view to southeast

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0003

Description and view of camera: North and East elevations, view to southwest

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0004

Description and view of camera: South and East elevation, view to northwest

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0005

Description and view of camera: Streetscape, view to southeast

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0006

Description and view of camera: Interior, counter, view to northwest

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0007

Historic Photographs

Huntley Project Headquarters Office, Ballantine, MT, circa 1919, (R- Courtesy Huntley Project Irrigation District)

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0008

Reclamation employees in front of Huntley Project Headquarter Office, Ballantine, MT, circa 1920 (R- Courtesy Huntley Project Irrigation District)

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0009

Superintendent E. E. Lewis Family in front of Reclamation Cottage with Huntley Project Headquarter Office in background, circa 1930s (R-Courtesy Huntley Project Museum of Irrigated Agriculture)

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0010

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Description and view of camera: South and West elevations, view to north/northeast
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0001

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Description and view of camera: West elevation (façade), view to east
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0002

Huntley Project Office
Name of Property

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Description and view of camera: North and West elevation, view to southeast
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0003

Huntley Project Office
Name of Property

Yellowstone Co., MT
County and State



Description and view of camera: North and East elevations, view to southwest
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0004

Huntley Project Office
Name of Property

Yellowstone Co., MT
County and State



Description and view of camera: South and East elevation, view to northwest
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0005

Huntley Project Office
Name of Property

Yellowstone Co., MT
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Description and view of camera: Streetscape, view to southeast
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0006

Huntley Project Office
Name of Property

Yellowstone Co., MT
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Description and view of camera: Interior, counter, view to northwest
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0007

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Huntley Project Headquarters Office to left, Ballantine, MT, 1919,
(R- Courtesy Huntley Project Irrigation District)
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0008

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Reclamation employees in front of Huntley Project Headquarter Office, Ballantine, MT
1920,
(R- Courtesy Huntley Project Irrigation District)
Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0009

Huntley Project Office
Name of Property

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Family in front of Reclamation Cottage with Huntley Project Headquarter Office in background,

(R- Courtesy Huntley Project Museum of Irrigated Agriculture)

Photograph: MT_YellowstoneCounty_HuntleyProject Office_0010